

Heart of Gold Awards: DCFS Salt Lake Region

Written by Mike Hamblin

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By Mike Hamblin, Utah Foster Care Foundation

Each year the Salt Lake Valley Quality Improvement Committee (QIC) recognizes a handful of Division of Child and Family Services' (DCFS) staff for their efforts in serving Utah's children and families with a "Heart of Gold" award. On Tuesday, March 15, the 2011 winners were announced.

Tara Gailey, Kyla Openshaw, Lorry Ann Shufflebeam, Vedrana Ilic, and Saori Phouthavongsay were recognized as outstanding Caseworkers. Also recognized were Iris Gomez, a Domestic Violence Specialist; Susannah Holden, a Resource Family Consultant; and Kim Shaw, a Permanency Program Manager.

Those in attendance listened to accounts of staff empowering and mentoring teens; advocating for clients and engaging community partners; along with a variety of examples of

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professionalism, innovation, sensitivity, dedication, and genuine care for the children and families they serve.

Marilyn Johnson, retired nurse and current QIC member, awarded the winners. Brent Platt and Diane Moore were in attendance to offer their congratulations.

“While our role is to advocate for improved services and outcomes for the families and children DCFS serves, we also want to recognize that there are staff at DCFS who are doing great things and making a difference in the lives of families and children,” says Mike Hamblin, Salt Lake Valley QIC Chair. “We think everyone should hear about them.”

The QIC is a committee made up of partners and community members who have a stake in the outcome of services provided to children and families. As informed critics of the child welfare system, their role is to study areas where improvement is needed and make recommendations.